

Next Step Staff Stories: John Libby



Well, my recovery seems to have been life long. Before touching a drug I always felt more comfortable living through my imagination. Fantasy is where my head was, even while sitting in a 5th grade classroom. I always felt anxiety and uncomfortable. When I was sixteen years old, my father died and I began drinking every day. When I was 20 years old my younger brother died and I began using opiates every day.

Subsequently, I added more and more to my everyday use until it was anything that happened to be around at the time. Mom did not sleep much for twenty years, to say the least. She was haunted by the ring of the phone.

After many trips to detox and a few halfway houses, I recognized the unmanageability of my chaotic 36-year life. A very close friend overdosed and a few days later I helped carry his casket. His mother could not walk down the aisle without help. His casket was light as a feather. These things struck me heavily and I will never see the world in the same way again.

A month later I was in Asheville living at Next Step Recovery. It was one of those perfect fits at the perfect time. I came and immediately got involved. I made a dozen AA/NA meetings a week. I took suggestions from healthy-minded people. In the past it had been very difficult for me to admit I needed help, but after accepting reality there was no choice but to give myself over to the process.

The Next Step Recovery staff, residents that came before me, and residents that come after me are now family. NSR had the foresight to see I may be staying for good and so they offered me employment. It has been a privilege and honor to learn from the knowledgeable staff and help people just like me get back into society.

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Spiritual principles now guide me as long as I stay out of the way. I am happy today with who I am and excited about every step I take. Mom slept well last night and the choices I make today will guarantee her sleep tonight. Once you accept there are no more excuses, you will begin to grow. As the last sentence of the AA Big Book says: "May God bless you and keep you -- until then". It's never too soon or too late.

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